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Student files suit to obtain data on CIA activity at ASU

An Arizona State University law student filed a Freedom of Information Act suit Monday in an attempt to learn if there were any covert activities involving the CIA at the university.

The suit was filed by Mark Barnes, ASU student body president for 1977-78, who says he has been trying to get the agency to send him certain documents since November 1977.

Defendants are the CIA and Director William Casey.

Barnes wrote a letter Nov. 1, 1977, to former agency Director Stansfield Turner asking for any documents showing that anyone at ASU was involved in research, propaganda purposes, gathering information or recruitment of foreign nationals for the agency.

In a March 1979 letter from the agency's information and privacy coordinator, Barnes was given two memos relating to ASU and was told that any information on covert activities would be considered classified.

The CIA neither denied nor confirmed that any additional records existed, according to the letter from George W. Owens, the informa-

tion and privacy coordinator at the time.

One of the memos was from L.L. Curran, an agency recruiter, and discussed CIA career opportunities. The second was a note by Curran to the ASU placement director saying he planned to return to campus later.

Barnes appealed the CIA's finding that further information was classified to the agency's Information and Review Committee on March 1979.

The last response he said he received from the agency was a Sept. 9 letter from John E. Bacon, information and privacy coordinator, that said the request still was being processed.

An agency official said in a June 1979 letter that there were numerous similar requests before the Barnes query and there was no way to say when the backlogged agency could get to his.

The suit, assigned to U.S. District Judge Charles Hardy, asks that the CIA be ordered to permit access to the requested documents.

Barnes said, "I believe it would be beneficial for the students in the university to know about this, even if it involves past events."

He said the students and faculty developed guidelines governing any intelligence agency involvement on campus several years ago. Learning about any covert CIA activities would indicate if the guidelines need revising, he said.